

Subject: Testimony supporting HB 5291 for public hearing

Dear Co-Chairs Cohen and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Slap and Palm, Ranking Members Miner and Harding, and members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Quiet Corner chapter of NEMBA located in the quiet corner of northeast CT, I write to ask you to support Raised House Bill 5291, An Act Authorizing Bonding for Bikeways, Greenways, and Recreational Trails.

This important bill would increase the bond authorization for the Recreational Trails and Greenways Grants program to \$6 million. In the fall of 2021 DEEP issued a request for recreational trails proposal with only \$3 million available. It received 65 applications requesting over \$22 million, of which the highly ranked proposals alone totaled over \$7 million. Although \$3 million was granted to twenty worthy projects, we expect the ongoing need for investments in Connecticut's outdoor recreation infrastructure to continue.

Now more than ever in this post pandemic world we live in, outdoor activity, specifically trails used for biking, hiking and others is extremely important to the well-being of people of all ages. This includes both physical and mental health. In addition, outdoor activities can bring economic benefits to several sectors of business, both small and large in local communities. Another important benefit of outdoor recreation is community and comradery. These activities promote gathering in groups and meeting new people.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

Rick Cicchetti

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